

Listing of Claims

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the subject application:

Claims 1-12 (canceled).

13. (currently amended) An optical pickup apparatus ~~as defined in claim 11~~, comprising:

a semiconductor laser and at least one light-receiving element formed in a single stem and positioned such that said semiconductor laser emits light ray flux along a first optical path through an objective lens onto an optical recording medium in a form of a small spot to facilitate operation of recording, reproducing and/or erasing of optical information, and such that said at least one light-receiving element receives light from a second optical path that is at least partially different from said first optical path; and

a uniaxial crystal plate having a discontinuous surface and being disposed in said first optical path between said semiconductor laser and the objective lens;

wherein said at least one light-receiving element formed on said stem consists of two pieces of two-divisional light-receiving elements respectively having dividing directions different from each other, and a height of one of said light-receiving elements is the same as a height of said semiconductor laser, while a height of another one of said light-receiving elements is different from said height of said semiconductor laser.

14. (currently amended) An optical pickup apparatus as defined in claim ~~11~~ 13, wherein a the uniaxial crystal plate is hermetically sealed unitarily in a package containing said semiconductor laser and said light-receiving element therein.

Claims 15-42 (canceled).

43. (previously presented) An optical pickup apparatus comprising:

a light source;

an objective lens for focusing light ray flux emitted from the light source on an optical recording medium;

a quarter-wave plate located between the light source and the optical recording medium;

a flux separating element configured to separate light rays reflected on the optical recording medium from an optical axis of incident light rays, the flux separating element being disposed in a divergent optical path between the light source and the quarter-wave plate; and

a light-receiving element positioned adjacent the light source and at a front side thereof for detecting a signal from the reflection light rays, wherein the light source and the light-receiving element are formed in a single stem,

wherein two pieces of prism consisting of same sort of uniaxial crystal respectively having optical axes intersecting perpendicularly to each other are employed as the flux separating element, such that when a refractive index for ordinary light rays of the prism n_o is

larger than a refractive index for extraordinary light rays n_e , an incident angle of the ordinary light rays transmitted through the first prism to the second prism is δ , and a counterclockwise angle from the optical axis of the ordinary light rays is in a plus (+) direction when the value of δ becomes larger than zero, and such that when n_o is larger than n_e , an incident angle of the extraordinary light rays transmitted through the first prism to the second prism is δ , and a counterclockwise angle from the optical axis of the extraordinary light rays is in a plus (+) direction when the value of δ becomes smaller than zero ($\delta < 0$).

Claims 44-52 (canceled).

53. (new) An optical pickup apparatus as defined in claim 13, further comprising a collimator lens located between the uniaxial crystal plate and the optical recording medium.

54. (new) An optical pickup apparatus as defined in claim 13, wherein an incident plain surface of the uniaxial crystal plate is not perpendicular to the optical axis.

55. (new) An optical pickup apparatus as defined in claim 13, wherein the semiconductor laser, the light-receiving element, the uniaxial crystal plate and the objective lens are mounted unitarily to form a unitary optical pickup portion.

56. (new) An optical pickup apparatus as defined in claim 55, wherein the unitary optical pickup portion is accommodated in an

actuator movable portion which can be moved both in a tracking direction and in a focusing direction.

57. (new) An optical pickup apparatus as defined in claim 13, wherein the semiconductor laser, the light-receiving element, the uniaxial crystal plate and the objective lens are accommodated in an actuator movable portion which can be moved both in a tracking direction and in a focusing direction.

58. (new) An optical pickup apparatus as defined in claim 13, wherein the optical disc apparatus is an optical pickup.

59. (new) An optical disc system comprising the optical disc apparatus as defined in claim 13.

60. (new) A method of directing incident light onto an optical recording medium and detecting reflected light therefrom, comprising:
emitting light flux from a light source along an emitting
direction;
causing said light flux emitted from said light source in said
emitting direction to travel along a first optical path
through a uniaxial crystal plate to an objective lens in a
form of a small spot to facilitate operation of recording,
reproducing and/or erasing of optical information,
said uniaxial crystal plate having a discontinuous surface and
being disposed in said first optical path between said
light source and the objective lens;
causing light ray flux reflected from the optical recording

medium to travel to at least one light-receiving element
through said uniaxial crystal plate and along a second
optical path that is at least partially different from said
first optical path,

wherein said light source and said at least one light-receiving
element are formed in a single stem, and

wherein said at least one light-receiving element formed on said
stem consists of two pieces of two-divisional light-
receiving elements respectively having dividing directions
different from each other, and a height of one of said
light-receiving elements is the same as a height of said
light source, while a height of another one of said light-
receiving elements is different from said height of said
light source.